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6 July 1959

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

File ED 188B

SUBJECT: FE C-118 Aircraft Conveyor System

1. On 30 June 1959, the undersigned visited Andrews Air Force Base with [redacted] Staff, for the purpose of inspecting the Subject Conveyor System.

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2. This conveyor uses a different principle than ours for tracking. The rollers are split instead of extending the width of the conveyor. In the middle of the conveyor is a channel (approx. 2" wide) in which a roller bearing rides. Two of these roller bearings are affixed to each pallet and cause the pallet to track around a 85 degree curve and out the door. This means that they have to use specially fabricated pallets which they claim is perfectly acceptable and does not hinder operations.

3. This conveyor extends only down the starboard side of the ship. FE claims that they have not needed more than one track to date. Apparently, the C-118 (DC-6) can carry upwards of 12,000 pounds operationally and this can be handled by the single track. If the occasion would arise where they would need more than one track they would put another one in but feed it forward into a 180 degree curve and then down their present track. As it now stands it weighs just under 400 pounds and the next prototype will weigh less. On the unit I saw not all of the rollers were made of Aluminum as the Chinese firm that made this unit could not obtain sufficient in time to make delivery. [redacted] claimed that their conveyor represents approximately \$400 U. S. money.

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4. This system has a folding portion, much the same as ours, that folds out into the slipstream. On the aft end they have two adjustable verticle rollers approximately 8" long to prevent the load from damaging the doorway and on the forward side another verticle roller to prevent the load from getting cocked in the doorway and damaging the forward part. The door width is 36". Again they claim that this width is adequate for any and all operational requirements. Since this aircraft is usually pressurized, they fly operational missions with the forward door removed (36") and state that there is no requirement for cargo doors such as we are developing.

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5. FE has immediate plans to produce two more of these conveyors. Their ultimate goal is to equip all of their aircraft (mostly C-46's) with this system. They feel that they cannot use our system if for no other reason it will not fit their 36" doors and they would never convert all their aircraft (approx. 14) with our cargo doors. FE made several operational drops with this system last winter.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

FE feels pretty good about their present system. However, at this writing it is hard to ascertain if the system is as good as it is claimed to be. Apparently, they have had many bugs to eliminate with past prototypes and they feel this current model after a few modifications will do the trick. [REDACTED] is in Colorado with the C-118 and the conveyor and is scheduled to participate in some drops using it. So upon his return we will have to get together with him and very closely scrutinize our conveyor and cargo door programs to be sure that we are working on the right thing and have a complete understanding of the program.

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OUR CONVEYOR SYSTEM & DOORS
ARE FOR [REDACTED] PROGRAM.

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THE SYSTEM USED BY FE REQUIRES SPECIAL PALLETIZING AND HANDLING EQUIPMENT DUE TO THE ROLLER BEARINGS USED AS GUIDES. [REDACTED] DOES NOT HAVE SUCH EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE AND WILL NOT HAVE IT ON HAND IN THE FUTURE. THEREFORE THE PRESENT CONVEYOR SYSTEM (ED188B) IS DESIRABLE.

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